

## CLAIMS

**Claim 1:** What is claimed for the Invention is a method:

- a. Employing electronic or digital loan application forms, or data gathering methods, or information matrices, or related information (hereinafter “Loan Documents”);
- b. Using one or more passwords, cryptographic keys, electronic or digital signatures/certificates (hereinafter collectively “Digital Signature” regardless of whether the reference is in the singular or plural) for the purposes of access to Loan Documents for purposes of signing, identifying, or rendering unalterable such Loan Documents;
- c. Authenticating at authentication levels acceptable to pertinent parties to the loan process (hereinafter “Parties”) the identity of any applicant of any Digital Signature employed in the loan process;
- d. Issuing Digital Signatures to the Parties;
- e. Transmitting over the Internet, the World Wide Web, wide area network, wireless, or other telecommunications system of one or more Loan Documents signed with or identified by a Digital Signature;
- f. Assembling or facilitating the assembling of one or more Loan Documents into electronic or digital file(s) (hereinafter “Closing File”);
- g. Allowing for the collaboration by Parties and other authorized parties in the creation, uploading, viewing, downloading, approval of the Closing File and/or its contents;

h. Allowing, optionally, the submission of application for Digital Signatures at any level of authentication by one or more of the Parties or other authorized entities;

i. Allowing the setting of a date, time, and place for any off line (out of band) portion of the loan process, or in the alternative, dispensing with the off line (out of band) portion of the loan process;

j. In the event the date, time, and place for the off line (out of band) portion of the Loan Process is set, then implementing the off line (out of band) portion of the loan process by a notary, closing officer, title agent, registration authority, or other duly authorized person (hereinafter the "Officer");

k. Allowing, optionally, the authentication by the Officer of the identity of the applicant for a legally-binding and/or non-repudiable Digital Signature according to protocols and predicated upon identifying documents acceptable to all of the requiring Parties, including without limitation a face-to-face contact between the Officer and the applicant for the legally-binding and/or non-repudiable Digital Signature in an off line (out of band) environment;

l. Allowing for the issuance of legally-binding and/or non-repudiable Digital Signature to the applicant therefore on a smart card, token, or other acceptably secure and private fixed medium either in our out of the presence of the Officer;

m. Allowing the use of any of the aforesaid Digital Signatures to initial and/or to sign the Loan Documents or Closing File in a signing environment in or out of the presence of the Officer;

n. Allowing, optionally, for the vaulting, either in the form of short-term reposition or long-term archiving, of digitally initialed or signed Loan Documents; and

o. Allowing, optionally, for the transmittal of the electronically or digitally initial or signed Loan Documents to other entities as authorized by the Parties or authorized entities;

p. Allowing, optionally, for the final archival management, records retention, and eventual document destruction of the digitally initialed or signed Loan Documents according to policies and procedures acceptable to the Parties or authorized entities.

**Claim 2:** The method of Claim 1, further allowing one or more Digital Signatures to be applied to a Loan Document or Closing File at different times during the loan process by the same or different entities in the presence of the Officer.

**Claim 3:** The method of Claim 1, further allowing one or more Digital Signatures to be applied to a Loan Document or Closing File at different times during the loan process by the same or different entities outside the presence of the Officer, but in real time by means of electronic, digital, Internet, web, network, wireless, or other telecommunications technologies that may include audio and/or visual contact between any of the Parties or entities and the Officer; and

**Claim 4:** The method of Claim 1, further allowing one or more Digital Signatures to be applied to a Loan Document or Closing File at different times during the loan process by the same or different entities outside the presence of the Officer upon condition that the authentication of the identity of the signatory of a Loan Document or Closing File using a Digital Signature was previously authenticated by protocols acceptable to the Parties, which protocols assures that the identity of the signatory employing Digital Signature to sign a Loan Document corresponds to the identifying documents provided by such signatory as part of an acceptable procedure for authenticating, certifying and issuing a pre-notarized or pre-authenticated Digital Signature and provided that applicable law recognizes the use of such pre-notarized or pre-authenticated Digital Signature on such Loan Document or Closing File.

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